

In the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): A method of obtaining product-related information regarding a product, comprising the steps of:

disposing a first computer of a user on a network that is operable to run an application program in the foreground and a product information access program in the background;

5 connecting an input device to the first computer to provide a user interface to the first computer and the operation of the input device coupled to the application and product information programs, wherein the input device can sense both positional data of an external surface that is related to an optical indicator on a user display associated with the first computer to indicate the relative position of the input device to the external surface when the first application program is running in the foreground, and detect optical indicia of the product from displayed indicia on an external optical indicia surface containing a product ID;

10 detecting with the input device the optical indicia of the product on the external optical indicia surface, the step of detecting the optical indicia associated with the product information access program ;

15 the product information access program operable to access a second computer disposed on the network in response to the detection of the optical indicia of the product with the input device;

performing a lookup operation at the second computer to match the product ID with routing information of each of a plurality of vendor servers disposed on the network, the vendor servers having unique product-related information of the product;

20 returning the routing information of the vendor servers from the second computer to the first computer in order to access the vendor servers; and

accessing the vendor servers in accordance with the routing information to return the product-related information to the first computer for simultaneous presentation to the user on the display.

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2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of accessing the vendor servers includes respectively accessing a distributor node of the input device, an advertiser node, and an E-commerce node.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the input device can sense information stored in magnetic medium.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of accessing the vendor server further comprises the steps of,

returning the product information of the product respectively from an advertiser node, distributor information of a distributor of the input device from a distributor node, and E-commerce information from an E-commerce node, and

framing separately the distributor information, product information, and E-commerce information in a browser window of the first computer for presentation to the user.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein in response to receiving scanned indicia and positional data from the input device, a software interface running on the first computer converts the received indicia data and generates the routing information for transmission to the second computer.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the routing information includes an input device ID and a network address of the second computer.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the user enables reading of the indicia, in the step of connecting, by first depressing one or more buttons on the input device.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a software interface running on the first computer is operable to automatically detect reading of the product indicia by the input device and detect positional data.

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9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the input device and a software interface running on the first computer perform a handshake operation using a unique input device ID stored in the input device prior to enabling operation of one or more operating modes of the input device.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A method for connecting two locations on a network utilizing a pointing device at the first location interconnected to a user's computer at the first location, comprising the steps of:

providing both positional and optical scanning capabilities in the pointing device;

scanning the pointing device with the optical scanning capability thereof over an encoded optical code, encoded with information representative of a location on the network of a second location,

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while operating a first program on the user computer which utilizes the positional capabilities of the pointing device of an external surface that is related to an optical indicator on a user display to indicate the relative position of the input device to the internal surface during running of the first program;

running a second program in the user's computer;

5 the operation of the pointing device coupled to the operation of the first and second programs;

detecting with the second program the scanning of the encoded optical code by the pointing device;

10 connecting with the second program the first location to each of a plurality of the second locations over the network through respective routing locations indicated by the information encoded in encoded optical codes in response to the step of detecting the encoded optical code; and

receiving information from each of the second locations transmitted therefrom to the first location for simultaneous display thereof on the display.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the encoded optical code is a barcode.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the encoded optical code is an ISBN code.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the encoded optical code is an EAN code.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the encoded optical code is disposed on a flat surface.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the encoded optical code is disposed on a product.

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25. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the encoded optical code is encoded with information regarding the product and associated with a product.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the step of receiving information comprises displaying the information received from the second location when received therefrom.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the step of connecting includes the step of watching a web browser program which is operable to interface with the network.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein the step of connecting comprises:
assembling a packet of data with the information extracted from the encoded optical code contained therein;

transferring the assembled packet to an intermediate network location remote from the first location;

providing at the intermediate location a database having contained therein a plurality of routing addresses on the network and corresponding encoded optical information;

comparing the information disposed in the received packet at the intermediate location with information in the database to determine if there is at least one corresponding routing address disposed therein corresponding with the encoded optical information;

if a match exists, then returning the matching information in the form of the routing address to the first location; and

connecting the first location to each of a plurality of the second locations in accordance with the network address information returned thereto from the intermediate location.

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